

## Emergency Preparedness

# Earthquakes



U.S. Department of State

*Are you prepared for an emergency?*



It's easy to think "It won't happen to me,"  
until it actually does.

**Have a plan and know what to do.**

### Special points of interest:

- What to do before, during, and after an earthquake.
- Prepare your Emergency Supplies
- Emergency Phone Numbers

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**Contact Information**  
**American Citizen Services**  
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# General Knowledge

## What is an Earthquake?

An earthquake, known in Spanish as terremoto or temblor, is a sudden movement of the earth's crust caused by the release of stress accumulated along geologic faults or by volcanic activity.



Earthquakes cannot be predicted, so it's important to be prepared and know what to do if an earthquake happens in your area. Along with damage to buildings and infrastructure, earthquakes can cause disruption to essential services including power, water, and telephones.

## Earthquakes in El Salvador

El Salvador lies along the terrestrial belt that links North and South America. It shares a northern border with the Republic of Honduras, to the south with the Pacific Ocean, to the east with the Republic of Honduras, and to the West with the Republic of Guatemala.



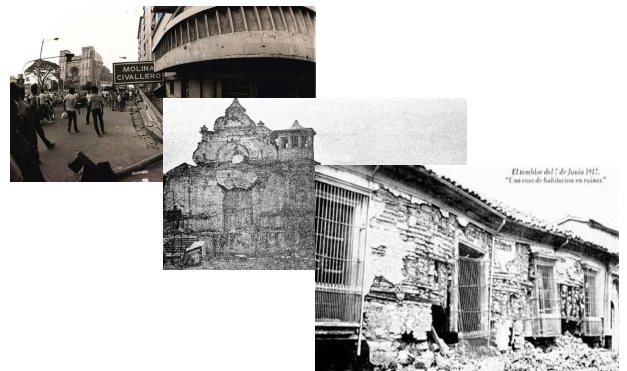
Due to its geographic location and vulnerability factors, El Salvador is susceptible to seismic activity. This activity frequently causes adverse events such as earthquakes, landslides, and damage. Families located in vulnerable and high-risk areas, such as those in areas with high poverty levels and low resilience, are in the most danger.

El Salvador experiences frequent low grade earthquakes, tremors known locally as temblores. El Salvador has also experienced multiple large, catastrophic quakes with a magnitude over 6.0 on the richter scale.

## History of Earthquakes in El Salvador

Though earthquakes are common in El Salvador, has experienced many major quakes that caused wide spread damage and injury. These are the most notable earthquakes:

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| -May 23rd ,1575 (Unknown) | -Jun 7th, 1917 (6.7)      |
| -Apr 21st, 1594 (Unknown) | -May 6th, 1951 ( 6.2)     |
| -Nov 3rd, 1658 (Unknown)  | -Apr 12th, 1961 (Unknown) |
| -Mar 6th, 1719 (7.0)      | -May 3rd, 1965 (6.5)      |
| -May 13th, 1748 (6.4)     | -Oct 10th, 1986 (5.7)     |
| -Oct 1st, 1839 (5.9)      | -Jan 13th, 2001 (6.6)     |
| -Apr 16th, 1854 (6.6)     | -Feb 13th, 2001 (6.1)     |



## Make a Communication Plan

Your family may not be together when an earthquake strikes, so it's important that you plan ahead on how to communicate with each other and get together in case of emergency. The landlines and cell phones are often out of service or saturated after a disaster, so you may need to use text messages or social networks to communicate with friends and family. Make sure to have a hardcopy of important phone numbers in case you can not access your phone's contact list.



## Preparation Is the Best Protection

To avoid possible injuries, take the time to protect your space, secure objects that can fall, fly, or slide in an earthquake. Imagine that the room is lifted and shaken from top to bottom and from left to right, and then determine which objects are at risk of falling. Periodically check the locations where you and your families spend the most time, such as your home, school, or workplace, looking for possible risks and mitigate them.



## Secure Your Area



Cabinet doors can be shaken open and the items that are inside can fall: Install cabinet door fasteners. Simple cabinet hardware can save lives and protect property.



Mirrors, picture frames, and other hanging objects must be attached to the wall with closed hooks. Do not hang heavy objects over beds, sofas, or anywhere where you sit, sleep, or spend a lot of time.



Electronic items such as computers, televisions, and microwave ovens are heavy and expensive to replace. Attach them to the wall with flexible nylon straps. Bookshelves, filing cabinets, and other types of tall furniture must be anchored to the framework of the wall. Locate the stud. Do not fasten to drywall or to the masonry. Use flexible straps that allow items to balance without falling to the floor.



Items such as books, lamps, and decorations placed on the shelves and tables can become dangerous projectiles. Secure them with hooks, adhesives, or putty to keep them in place. Move heavier or fragile items to the lower shelves.



# Emergency Supplies

Take the time to put together the emergency supplies you would need if the power or water supply is cut off and if the supermarkets do not open. You can accumulate your supplies over time by adding some items as your budget allows. Basic emergency supplies should include the following items, most of which you probably already have at home.

If possible, consider storing supplies in different places. Keep a small kit of basic supplies of food and water in various locations, including your workplace, vehicle, home, and if possible, other places where you or your family members regularly spend time (e.g. community center and school).



**Water:** Make sure you have at least 1 gallon of water per person, per day, for at least 3 days. (If possible, store a water supply for more than 3 days). An average person needs to drink about 3/4 of a gallon of fluids daily. Individual needs vary depending on age, health, activity level, food choices, and climate. You may also need to store water to prepare food.

**Food:** Take at least a 3 day supply of non-perishable food on hand for each family member, including pets. Consider special dietary requirements (e.g. formula for babies). Include a manual can opener for canned foods.

**Flashlight, Radio, and Cellphone charger:** Consider how you will charge these items without electricity. Your flashlight and radio should work with crank or batteries. Keep a supply of additional batteries. Your cell phone charger should work with a crank, solar, or car charger

**Medical supplies:** Include a first aid kit, prescription and over-the-counter medications, and other medical supplies.

**Hygiene:** Pack disinfecting supplies such as hand sanitizer, wipes, paper products, and plastic bags to use when water resources are limited.

**Clothing and Maintenance:** Make sure you have long-sleeved clothing and long pants, thick-soled shoes and work gloves to protect you from debris, and a blanket to keep you warm on chilly nights.

**Whistle:** Include a whistle to call for help.

**Cash:** Store cash in case ATMs are not working.



## Protect Yourself During an Earthquake

DROP, COVER, and HOLD during an earthquake, minimize your movements to a few steps to a safe place nearby, if you are indoors, stay there until the shaking is over and be sure it is safe to leave.

**WHEN THE EARTH SHAKES,  
KNOW WHAT TO DO:**



### If you are indoors



- Drop to the ground, take cover by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture, and hold on until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture.
- Only load bearing reinforced doorway provide protection! Many inside doorways are purely functional and do not offer protection.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Do not exit a building during the shaking.
- Do not use elevators.
- If you are in bed stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow. Attempts to move in the dark cause more injury than staying in bed.

### If you are outdoors



- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and power lines. Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits, and alongside exterior walls.

### If you are in your car



- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and power lines. Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged during the quake.



# Protect Yourself After an Earthquake

Once the quake is over, wait a minute before getting up and then take a look for debris or other hazards, if you are able to, move safely out of the building to an open space. Avoid damaged areas and power lines that have fallen. If you are indoors in an urban area, with no clear spaces in the vicinity, it may be safer to stay inside until you are sure there is no threat from falling debris and glass. Large earthquakes are frequently accompanied by aftershocks which can be minor or serious. They can weaken already damaged infrastructure. Drop, cover, and hold whenever you feel a jolt.



Pay attention to local news (e.g., radio, television, and cell phone text alerts) for emergency information and instructions.



Consider the risk of fire and stay away from damaged areas. Never use lighters or matches near damaged areas.

*If you smell gas GET AWAY!*



If you are in a damaged building and there is a safe way out of the debris, go to an open, outdoors space. If you can do so safely, take a moment to carry with you things you might need immediately such as your car/house keys, purse, or a bag of emergency supplies. Once you are outside, do not re-enter the building until you verify that it is safe to do so.



If trapped, try not to move or kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing. Scream only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust. Use your cell phone to call or send a text message for help. Tap a pipe or a wall or use a whistle, if you have one, so rescuers can find you.



If you're near the coast, find out if there is tsunami warning near that area. If you are in an area that can experience tsunamis, once the jolt is over, immediately move inland or up to high ground. Listen to officials and news reports for more information about evacuation plans.



If you see someone who is injured or trapped, inform the authorities.

If you are trained in first aid, provide support. Keep the person calm and warm until help comes.





# Emergency Services in El Salvador

There are several Salvadoran institutions who respond to emergencies such as floods and provide service to the community during and after an emergency. Some of these institutes include the Green cross, Red cross, Protección civil, and MARN (El Salvador's Ministry Environment and Natural Resources)

**Protección civil** is the national system that prevents and mitigates disasters in El Salvador.



**MARN** is the acronym for El Salvador's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. MARN is in charge of environmental assessment. In addition, the ministry is responsible for promoting international cooperation on environmental issues.



**The Green Cross** is a Salvadoran organization that provides disaster assistance, including rescue operations.



**The Red Cross** is a well known international organization that also provides disaster assistance.



## Emergency Numbers



### Local Police

Speed dial **911** or visit the [nation-wide directory](#) to call a specific PNC delegation.

**Website:** [Policia Nacional Civil](#)



### Salvadoran Red Cross

dial 2222-5155

**Website:** [Red Cross](#)

### Salvadoran Green Cross

Dial 2284-5792

**Website:** [Green Cross](#)



### Fire Fighter Department:

Dial 913 or 2527-7300, you may also see visit their [phone directory](#) on line.

**Website:** [Bomberos de El Salvador](#)



### Protección civil:

Dial 2527-7122

**Website:** [Protección Civil](#)



### U.S Embassy in El Salvador American Citizen Services

Dial 2501 2628

Email: [ACSSANSAL@State.gov](mailto:ACSSANSAL@State.gov)

Local Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work: \_\_\_\_\_  
Neighbors: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian: \_\_\_\_\_

# Emergency Kit Checklist



## Food and Water

- ☐ Canned Food
- ☐ Energy Bars
- ☐ Dried Food
- ☐ Water for 3 days
- ☐ Candies and Crackers



## For Babies

- ☐ Formula
- ☐ Diapers
- ☐ Bottles
- ☐ Medication



## Sanitation

- ☐ Toilet Paper
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Feminine Supplies
- ☐ Toothbrush
- ☐ Toothpaste

## Tools and Supplies

- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Extra Batteries
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Utility Knife
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Cellphone
- ☐ Battery-operated Radio
- ☐ Solar Charger
- ☐ Crank/ Solar operated Radio
- ☐ Solar Charger



## Documents

- ☐ Passports
- ☐ Emergency phone numbers
- ☐ Credit Card
- ☐ Personal documents

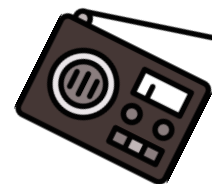


## Clothes & Bedding

- ☐ A complete change of clothing including footwear.

## First aid Kit

- ☐ Bandages
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer
- ☐ Gauze Pads
- ☐ Gauze Roll(s)
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Cold Packs
- ☐ Ibuprofen
- ☐ Aspirin
- ☐ Tylenol
- ☐ Bug Spray
- ☐ Alcohol
- ☐ Antibiotic
- ☐ Cotton Swabs
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Elastic Bandages
- ☐ Allergy medicine
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Prescription Medicine







# Enroll in STEP

## What is STEP?

### STEP:

- ✓ **S**mart
- ✓ **T**raveler
- ✓ **E**nrollment
- ✓ **P**rogram



The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. Citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

## Benefits of Enrolling in STEP

- Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.



Click on the pictures above to learn more about your situation and register in STEP.

Stay Informed, Stay Connected, Stay Safe!